

Summaries of GAO reports on Cooperatives

GAO reports on cooperatives published since 2000:

- **HEHS-00-49 Private Health Insurance: Cooperatives Offer Small Employers Plan Choice and Market Prices**

GAO's review of five purchasing cooperatives in 2000 found that the cooperatives were successful in providing the small employers with eased administrative burden and an increased range of benefit options. However, they were not able to provide leverage in negotiating lower premiums, as available plans were offered at the same market rates that were available to small employers outside of the cooperative.

- **GAO-04-277 - Individual Fishing Quotas: Methods for Community Protection and New Entry Require Periodic Evaluation**

This report evaluated the comparative advantages and disadvantages of the Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) system and the fishery cooperative approach, and found that IFQ programs have greater stability than cooperatives because they are established by federal regulations, while cooperatives are voluntary contractual arrangements.

- **GAO-04-91 Credit Unions: Financial Condition Has Improved, but Opportunities Exist to Enhance Oversight and Share Insurance Management**

GAO evaluated the financial condition of the credit union industry (credit unions are member-owned) and the deposit (share) insurance fund, and how the National Credit Union Administration (NCUA) had changed its safety and soundness processes.

- **T-AIMD-00-115 - Financial Management: USDA Faces Major Financial Management Challenges**

GAO assessed the Rural Utilities Service's electric loan program policies and procedures and the government's vulnerability to losses from direct loans or guarantees that the Service made to electric cooperatives.

In addition to the above reports, GAO also published three reports and one testimony that briefly discussed health insurance purchasing associations available to employers and contingent workers:

- **GAO-06-656 Employment Arrangements: Improved Outreach Could Help Ensure Proper Worker Classification**
- **GAO-02-225 Private Pensions: Improving Worker Coverage and Benefits**
- **GAO-01-481T Proposals for Expanding Private and Public Coverage**
- **HEHS-00-76 Contingent Workers: Incomes and Benefits Lag Behind Those of Rest of Workforce**

GAO reports from 1990-1999

- **HEHS-94-142: Access to Health Insurance: Public and Private Employers' Experience With Purchasing Cooperatives**

GAO examined several governance issues of health care insurance purchasing cooperatives, including the composition of coops' governing boards, representational safeguards, and the potential for politicization of appointments.

- **T-AIMD-98-123 Rural Utilities Service: Risk Assessment for the Electric Loan Portfolio**

This testimony summarized GAO's work on the Rural Utilities Service's (RUS) electric loan portfolio and the potential for future losses to the federal government from these loans. GAO noted that under Department of Justice authority, during fiscal year (FY) 1996 and through July 31, 1997, RUS wrote off about \$1.5 billion of loans to rural electric cooperatives.

- **RCED-98-70 Dairy Industry: Information on Marketing Channels and Prices for Fluid Milk**

GAO provided information on the entities that handle fluid milk from the time it leaves the farm to the time it is sold to the customer, including dairy cooperatives.

- **RCED-96-64R Payments to CO-OPs**

GAO examined whether the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) procedures for making payments to cooperative marketing associations (Co-Ops) were adequate for ensuring that Co-Op member's payments stay within annual statutory limits.

- **GGD-95-63 National Consumer Cooperative Bank: Oversight Adequate but Federal Loan Repayment Needs Monitoring**

GAO examined the ability of the Farm Credit Administration's oversight of the National Consumer Cooperative Bank, and its ability to effectively monitor the Bank's safety and soundness. GAO also reviewed the Bank's obligation to repay the Treasury debt.

- **RCED-93-5 Food Assistance: School Milk Contract Bid-Rigging**

GAO examined USDA's and Justice's oversight of agricultural cooperative pricing.

- **RCED-90-186 Dairy Cooperatives: Role and Effects of the Capper-Volstead Antitrust Exemption**

GAO provided information on the limited antitrust exemption provided to agricultural cooperatives under the Capper-Volstead Act, particularly as it pertains to the dairy industry.